DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 390 436 IR 055 783

TITLE	Library Services and Construction Act: A Focus on Evaluation. A Stakeholder Evaluation Handbook.
INSTITUTION	Michigan Library, Lansing.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	30p.; Revised by Sharon Granger and others.
PUB TYPE	Guides - General (050)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Evaluation Research; *Federal Aid; Grants; *Library Administration; Library Funding; *Library Planning; Meetings; *Program Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	Grant Recipients; *Library Services and Construction Act; Michigan; *Stakeholder Evaluation

ABSTRACT

This handbook offers guidance to library personnel in planning and evaluating Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) grant programs. It was developed for use in the intermediate stages of identifying uses for real or potential funds, rather than as a tool for preliminary needs assessment or for preparing an LSCA grant application. The steps of the stakeholder-centered evaluation approach include: (1) develop a preliminary project plan; (2) identify the project stakeholders; (3) hold a meeting of those stakeholders, discussing and completing a project evaluation worksheet; (4) redefine the project proposal; (5) collect and analyze evaluation data; (6) summarize evaluation data for stakeholders; and (7) prepare a final report. Appendices contain a sample meeting agenda and project evaluation worksheet, suggested data collection methods, 10 references, an outline of stakeholder titles, and a glossary. (BEW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 390 436

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Library of Michigan

LSCA

Library Services & Construction Act

Stakeholder Evaluation Handbook

A Focus on Evaluation

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
John Rummel
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

IROSS 783

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Representative Michael J. Griffin, Co-Chair
Representative Paul Hillegonds, Co-Chair
Senator Dick Posthumus, Alternate Chair

Senator John D. Cherry, Jr.
Senator Dan L. DeGrow
Senator Arthur J. Miller, Jr.
Senator John D. Pridnia
Senator John J. H. Schwarz

Representative Tom Alley
Representative Richard Bandstra
Representative Frank M. Fitzgerald
Representative Pat Gagliardi

ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Senator Fred Dillingham
Senator Gilbert DiNello
Senator Michael O'Brien
Representative Jan Dolan
Representative Curtis Hertel
Elliott Smith, Secretary

LIBRARY OF MICHIGAN BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Frances H. Pletz, Chair
Bonnie A. Gasperini, Vice-Chair
Margaret E. Auer
Representative Dianne Byrum
Chief Justice Michael Cavanagh
represented by Dennis Donohue
Linda Cooley
Dr. Hiram L. Davis

Joseph E. Garcia
Hicks G. Griffiths
Linda McFadden
Representative Glenn Oxender
Senator Lana Pollack
Senator John D. Pridnia
Elliott Smith
Harry P. Wu

James W. Fry, Secretary

LIBRARY OF MICHIGAN

James W. Fry, State Librarian
Jeffrey P. Johnson, Deputy State Librarian

Federal Programs Division, Joan M. Groening, Director
Internal Operations Division, Janet Laverty, Director
Public Services Division, Susan E. Nearing, Director
Technical Services Division, Kathleen Menanteaux, Director

Library Services and Construction Act

A Focus on Evaluation

A Stakeholder Evaluation Handbook

This document prepared and revised by Sharon Granger, Donald Leaf, and Charles Wolfe and edited by Jeff Johnson of the Library of Michigan.

Library of Michigan
LSCA Support Staff Directory

Joan Groening
Director 373-1580

Sharon Granger
LSCA Grant Administrator 373-5508

Naomi Krefman
Federal Programs Supervisor 373-1580

Janice Oakley
Internal Auditor 373-4328

Dan Simon
Grants Coordinator 373-5867

Charles Wolfe
LSCA Grant Administrator 373-1299

These individuals may also be reached via ***telefax*** at (517) 373-5700.

Table of Contents

Page

Introduction 1

When to Use This Handbook 1

Project Evaluation is Important to the Library of Michigan 1

Project Evaluation is Important to Your Library 2

The Stakeholder Approach to Project Evaluation 2

Seven Steps of Project Evaluation 3

- Step 1. Develop a Preliminary Project Plan 4
- Step 2. Identify the Project Stakeholders 4
- Step 3. Hold a Meeting of Project Stakeholders 4
- Step 4. Redefine the Project Proposal 8
- Step 5. Collect and Analyze Evaluation Data 9
- Step 6. Summarize Evaluation Data for Stakeholders 9
- Step 7. Prepare Final Evaluation Report 10

Wrapping Up 10

Appendices

- Appendix A Library Project Planning Meeting Agenda 12
- Appendix B Project Evaluation Worksheet 13
- Appendix C Data Collection Methods 16
- Appendix D Bibliography 18
- Appendix E Roles for Stakeholders 19
- Appendix F Glossary 20

Introduction

This handbook has been developed by the Library of Michigan with the encouragement of the U.S. Department of Education. It will guide you in planning and conducting evaluations of your grant programs. The handbook is intended to be practical, easy to use, and relevant to the evaluation needs of library staff. Following comments on the use of the handbook and the **stakeholder approach** to evaluation, a step-by-step method is used to present the information. Seven steps for project evaluation take the reader from start to finish. These steps are explained in detail later in this publication.

When to Use This Handbook

It is important to understand the context in which this handbook is meant to be used. Evaluation is only one component of project planning and the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) application process. This handbook covers only the development of your project evaluation, it is not meant to be an overall guide to preparing an LSCA grant application. Prior to applying the seven-step method presented here, you should do all of the following:

1. Recognize unmet community needs which library services and/or programs may meet;
2. Read all documents in the current LSCA application package;
3. Match the needs you have identified with LSCA funding areas for potential project development; and
4. Attend a Library of Michigan grant writing workshop to improve your overall understanding of the application forms and guidelines.

In order to receive the most benefit from this handbook, we suggest that you have a project in mind, complete with documentation of the needs it will address, as well as the project goal and objectives. At this point you are ready to apply the **stakeholder approach** as you develop your project's plan for evaluation.

Project Evaluation is Important to the Library of Michigan

The Library of Michigan is responsible for the administration of Library Services and Construction Act Titles I, II, and III. These grant programs award federal funds to support a variety of library services. The number of grants awarded has grown considerably over the past five years as evidenced by the 147 projects funded in 1993. In response to this growth, the Library of Michigan has offered grant writing workshops, enhanced the clarity of the application forms, and added greater detail to the grant guidelines. These efforts were undertaken to make applying for federal grants more manageable for applicants and the Library of Michigan alike.

State Librarian James W. Fry recently said, "Evaluation is the watchword for the 90's when using public funds." This applies to the potential grant recipient as well as to the Library of Michigan. The Library of Michigan seeks well-planned project proposals supported by meaningful evaluations. Evaluation of grant-funded projects is important to the Library of Michigan for many reasons. The results of project evaluation are used for:

- Identifying model projects to serve as examples for other libraries
- Completing reporting requirements of the U.S. Department of Education
- Ensuring development of a well thought out project by the applicant
- Documenting to Congress the continued need for LSCA funding

Upon becoming a subgrant recipient, you are responsible for the wise expenditure of federal dollars. Likewise, the Library of Michigan is accountable to the federal government for the effective use of Michigan's allotment of LSCA funds. We share responsibility for the thoughtful expenditure of federal funds with you and because of that, the Library of Michigan is fully committed to strong, purposeful evaluations of every LSCA-funded project in Michigan.

Project Evaluation is Important to Your Library

In addition to meeting the requirements of the Library of Michigan, you should evaluate programs to plan effectively, to improve programs, and to increase program impact. A program or project is a set of activities, services, and materials organized to achieve a specific goal, supported by project objectives. Examples of LSCA-funded projects include an event sponsored by a public library or an outreach service of the library or of the public library cooperative.

One purpose of this handbook is to assist library staff in learning the simple steps that can provide a meaningful evaluation. Some library staff have been reluctant to evaluate programs. Common reasons for this reluctance include seeing no direct benefits for the library, believing there is a lack of knowledge or time to conduct a credible evaluation, or finally, fearing that evaluation results could show failure rather than success.

Evaluation of a project or a program can produce information that is useful to all interested parties. You may want to adjust a program in midstream to make it more effective, or decide whether to repeat a special event a second year, or approach a funding source to expand a given service. In any of these cases, information on the impact of your project—evaluation data—will be of great help. Effective evaluation requires additional investments of time and resources; however, the benefits of evaluation are worth these extra efforts.

The Stakeholder Approach to Project Evaluation

The Library of Michigan encourages an evaluation process that involves a representative group of those people who manage, receive services, or otherwise have an interest in a project. This is a **stakeholder approach**—involvement of those people who have a stake in the evaluation findings and the success of the project. Library staff, library users and community leaders are all potential stakeholders. The identification and use of stakeholders is the cornerstone of the evaluation technique presented in this handbook. The Library of Michigan rating scale used to rank LSCA grant applications is weighted to award up to 25 of the 100 possible points in recognition of a strong evaluation component.

The involvement of stakeholders in your project's evaluation will have many benefits. Overall, the varied points of view and expertise these individuals will bring to the project are likely to be very helpful. While the grant administrator has responsibility and authority for all aspects of the project, stakeholders can be an excellent resource whose advice many prove invaluable in planning evaluation.

Other benefits of the **stakeholder approach** include the added legitimacy that involving a broader group of individuals brings. This same group, extending beyond the library and into the community, may also bring added community support before, during and following the project's life.

The Library of Michigan strives to make the grant application process understandable to applicants. We also want to help you to plan strong projects and to write effective proposals. The better organized the plans are for a project, the more likely it is that the project will be a success. Project evaluation is an integral part of the Library of Michigan LSCA application form. Evaluation should also be an essential part of all project planning. In reviewing this handbook, notice that the planning process for a project and planning for the project's evaluation should occur simultaneously. Conducting evaluation as a continuous process during the life of a project will help to insure the success of your project.

A final word about evaluation before you begin to read this handbook—there is no reason to restrict evaluation to LSCA grant projects. While this handbook has been developed within the context of the Library of Michigan's LSCA grant program, the **stakeholder approach** to evaluation can be applied to any program or project your library is undertaking. The desire to offer useful and successful services to their users is common to all librarians. Evaluation can serve as the key ingredient in your recipe for success by providing information for project fine tuning as well as the documentation needed to seek additional funds. Feel free to use the ideas presented here in many areas of your library's operation.

SEVEN STEPS of Project Evaluation

The seven steps for project evaluation that take the reader from start to finish are:

1. **Develop a Preliminary Project Plan**
2. **Identify the Project Stakeholders**
3. **Hold a Meeting of Project Stakeholders**
4. **Redefine the Project Proposal**
5. **Collect and Analyze Evaluation Data**
6. **Summarize Evaluation Data for Stakeholders**
7. **Prepare Final Evaluation Report**

Step One: Develop a Preliminary Project Plan

As indicated earlier in this handbook, your first step must be to examine your program and service needs in comparison with current LSCA funding areas. After identifying the areas eligible for LSCA funding, begin thinking about each individual project's goal and objectives. Long before you begin to complete an application form, think through your project carefully, beginning to identify what you will do to achieve each objective and who will be involved in the project.

Step Two: Identify the Project Stakeholders

The cornerstone of project evaluation design is the participation of the stakeholders; those people who have a stake in the evaluation findings. Library staff, library users, library board members, and other community leaders are all potential stakeholders in a program or project. These individuals may be involved in the project's implementation, may be in decision-making positions for future project funding, or may be potential recipients of project services.

Evaluations should be designed to be both useful and used. Before you begin, ask yourself these questions:

- How can I design the evaluation?
- How should I collect and analyze the data?
- How should the findings be reported, so that my stakeholders can plan, implement, and increase the impact of our program?

Answering thse questions requires addressing the needs of stakeholders and being responsive to the ways in which information is used within your organization.

Early and continuous involvement by representatives of the various stakeholder groups will increase the likelihood that your evaluation findings will also be used by the stakeholders. Their participation means that they will have a say in the information to be collected; they will feel a sense of ownership in both the evaluation and in the program or project itself.

Step Three: Hold a Meeting of Project Stakeholders

A successful meeting with stakeholders will require that these three substeps are completed. You will need to:

A. Prepare an agenda for the meeting

B. Review the Project Evaluation Worksheet prior to the meeting

C. Hold the meeting, following the agenda items

A. Prepare an agenda for the meeting

Invite representatives of each of your stakeholder constituencies to a meeting. At the time these invitations are issued, you may want to seek input from these individuals regarding additional stakeholder constituencies for your consideration. At this meeting, plan to discuss the overall purpose of the proposed project or program, the tentative outline of project activities, and the purpose of the evaluation. A tentative agenda, ready to be individualized with your library name, meeting place and time for this first meeting, is included in Appendix A. It is helpful to mail copies of the agenda to participants in advance of the meeting.

B. Review the Project Evaluation Worksheet prior to the meeting

A Project Evaluation Worksheet (Appendix B contains a completed sample worksheet) is designed to help you ask and answer all the questions necessary to create a project evaluation at this first meeting. To ready yourself for the meeting, you should develop the basic details of the proposed project, be prepared to share this information with stakeholders, and have carefully reviewed the Project Evaluation Worksheet. As the grant administrator, you should lead your stakeholders through a review of the worksheet, and have specific ideas on the desired outcomes of these efforts. Resist the temptation to skip ahead in the questions. The sequence of these questions is important. Take time when you start designing your evaluation to answer each one as fully as possible. The completed Project Evaluation Worksheet will become a component of your LSCA grant application. The application package sent to all public libraries now contains the Project Evaluation Worksheet as one of the required items to be completed along with the abstract, budget, project narrative and other proposal components.

C. Hold the Meeting, Following the Agenda Items

Library Project Planning Meeting

Tentative Agenda

1. **Introduce Meeting Participants**
2. **Review Purpose of Meeting**
   - **Identify Source of Grant Funds**
   - **Discuss Community Need in Relationship to Grant Funding Categories**
   - **Present Overview of Project Concept**
   - **Describe Stakeholder Evaluation Process**
   - **Summarize Efforts to Date**
3. Describe the Proposed Project
   - Goal and Objectives
   - Activities
   - Budget
   - Evaluation
4. Discuss and Complete Project Evaluation Worksheet
5. Determine On-Going Role for Meeting Participants
6. Schedule Next Meeting Date
7. Adjournment

Agenda Item 1. *Introduce Meeting Participants*

Introduce each of the participants, including the agency or constituency which they represent, and their relationship to the proposed project.

Agenda Item 2. *Review Purpose of Meeting*

The better prepared you are to present the project plan and the overall purpose of the meeting, the more productive the group's efforts will be. Be clear about what the project or program will try to achieve, as well as the reason you are meeting with the group. This agenda item allows you to cover five important points while describing the purpose of the meeting: identifying the source of the grant funds, discussing community needs in relationship to grant funding categories and your library's mission, presenting the broad project concept, describing the stakeholder evaluation process, and summarizing your efforts to date.

11 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Agenda Item 3. *Describe the Proposed Project*

In order to help your group to get a firm understanding of the proposed project, outline the goal and project objectives, the activities you expect will take place to achieve each objective, and the budget. You may want to re-emphasize the importance of the group's work by ending with the potential for project evaluation. The old adage, "If you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there?" applies here. Understanding your overall project goal and knowing the objectives and their desired outcomes is essential for both you and your group of stakeholders.

Agenda Item 4. *Discuss and Complete Project Evaluation Worksheet*

The Project Evaluation Worksheet which will be completed during this meeting is a key planning document for project administration. It helps to set the foundation blocks for what the project will be and how its success will be assessed. The worksheet (See Appendix B for a completed sample) identifies five questions which must be answered in developing your project evaluation:

I. What questions will the evaluation answer?

II. What sources of data will be used to answer the questions?

III. What methods will be used to collect the data?

IV. In what forms and to whom will the evaluation be reported?

V. How will the evaluation results be used?

Library Project Planning Meeting

Tentative Agenda

1. Introduce Meeting Participants
2. Review Purpose of Meeting
   - Identify Source of Grant Funds
   - Discuss Community Need in Relationship to Grant Funding Categories
   - Present Overview of Project Concept
   - Describe Stakeholder Evaluation Process
   - Summarize Efforts to Date
3. **Describe the Proposed Project**
   - **Goal and Objectives**
   - **Activities**
   - **Budget**
   - **Evaluation**
4. **Discuss and Complete Project Evaluation Worksheet**
5. Determine On-Going Role for Meeting Participants
6. Schedule Next Meeting Date
7. Adjournment

Determine what **questions** will be used to guide the measure of project success before identifying what data you will collect. Avoid the temptation of determining the data that can be easily gathered for the project and designing evaluation questions to match. The key step is identifying the questions that the evaluation should answer in order to determine the impact of the project. *Your project evaluation should ultimately seek to answer the question, "So what?; what difference did this project make?"* This is a role for the stakeholders. Ask them what they want to know and why this information is important.

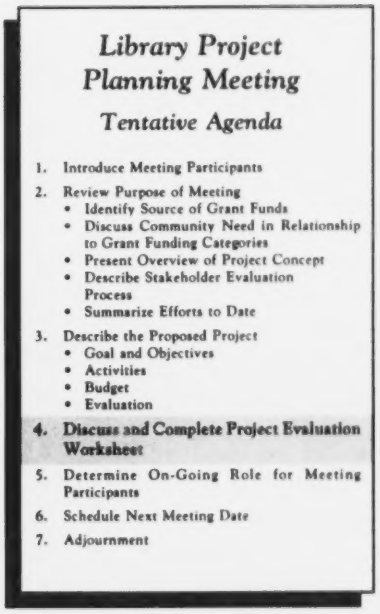
For example, evaluation of a project to develop a special library collection for older adults might address the following questions:

- What were the characteristics of the people who used the collection?
- Was the collection used by older adults in the target community?
- In what ways did the new collection have an impact on the library?
- In what ways did the collection have an impact on the local communities?
- What do older adults think of the library and the new collection?
- Is the cost of the collection worth the benefits that it provides?

Both objectives and the methodology or activities in your project proposal may be relatively easy to measure. For example, evaluation data can be gathered to give you counts of items purchased, numbers of individuals

Agenda Item 4. *Discuss and Complete Project Evaluation Worksheet*

(Continued)



Library Project Planning Meeting

Tentative Agenda

1. Introduce Meeting Participants
2. Review Purpose of Meeting
   - Identify Source of Grant Funds
   - Discuss Community Need in Relationship to Grant Funding Categories
   - Present Overview of Project Concept
   - Describe Stakeholder Evaluation Process
   - Summarize Efforts to Date
3. Describe the Proposed Project
   - Goal and Objectives
   - Activities
   - Budget
   - Evaluation
4. **Discuss and Complete Project Evaluation Worksheet**
5. Determine On-Going Role for Meeting Participants
6. Schedule Next Meeting Date
7. Adjournment

in attendance at a program, and so forth. When looking more broadly at your project or program goal, you and the stakeholder group must identify questions whose answers will document real success or project impact, but may be more difficult to measure. The questions you seek to answer should go well beyond counts of materials purchased or numbers of individuals in attendance at an event.

For example, if the goal of your project is to enhance the image of the library as an information provider in the community, potential indicators of achievement of this goal include:

- Has library funding improved?
- Have general community attitudes toward the public library changed?
- What is the reputation of the library among community leaders?
- What are the library staff attitudes toward the library's services?
- In what ways is the library used by the local community?

Let the evaluation questions determine the best methods and procedures to use in data collection. Be sure to identify your project's evaluation questions before selecting any collection methods or data sources. Avoid reversing this order by attempting to determine how you will collect the data before developing the questions. If you are asking, "How many people in the target population were affected by this program?" then records of program usage and demographics of participants should be reviewed. If you are asking, "How does this program affect library users?" then a survey of all users or interviews of small groups of users are possible strategies.

People, library statistics, reports, and program records are all potential **data sources** to answer your evaluation questions. Frequently many sources will help you answer a question. By identifying the best data sources for answering each question, you will also be able to select the most effective data collection methods.

For example, to answer the question, "How has our new library facility improved the quality and quantity of service to library users?," data could be collected from the following sources:

- Circulation records
- Comments by library users
- Applications for library cards
- Community groups that use library facilities
- Head count of library users
- Comments by public officials
- Comments by outside consultants
- Comments by library staff

Agenda Item 4. *Discuss and Complete Project Evaluation Worksheet*

(Continued)

While the stakeholder group may identify multiple sources, you should select a limited number of reliable sources for use in answering any single question. Choices should be made based on the sources which will provide you with the best data. In deciding, you will also want to take into consideration available staff time, reliability of data, financial resources, timeliness of information, and deadlines for reporting the findings.

Useful evaluations can be conducted using any one of a wide variety of **data collection methods**. The Data Collection Methods table in Appendix C lists seven general categories of methods that can be used to evaluate library programs or projects. Your choice depends on the question that you are asking and the sources from which you want to collect the data. You can use the table to determine which methods are best to use in your situation. Many excellent resources on evaluation methods are available. A bibliography that includes a few of these sources is provided at the end of this handbook in Appendix D.

The last two questions to be answered on the Project Evaluation Worksheet relate to matters following the data collection phase of your work. As the stakeholders discuss their interests and responsibilities in the proposed project, help them to identify the most useful formats in which evaluation information should be reported, how the information will be used, and the potential outcomes of their deliberations after project evaluation. Appendix B provides a sample of possible formats for reporting data and ideas on the possible use of evaluation results. Stakeholders may not be aware of the potential for project fine tuning, extension, and/or expansion that this information may provide. As you complete the Project Evaluation Worksheet, remember that it will become an integral component of your LSCA grant application.

Library Project Planning Meeting

Tentative Agenda

1. Introduce Meeting Participants
2. Review Purpose of Meeting
   - Identify Source of Grant Funds
   - Discuss Community Need in Relationship to Grant Funding Categories
   - Present Overview of Project Concept
   - Describe Stakeholder Evaluation Process
   - Summarize Efforts to Date
3. Describe the Proposed Project
   - Goal and Objectives
   - Activities
   - Budget
   - Evaluation
4. **Discuss and Complete Project Evaluation Worksheet**
5. **Determine On-Going Role for Meeting Participants**
6. **Schedule Next Meeting Date**
7. Adjournment

Agenda Item 5. *Determine On-Going Role for Meeting Participants*

Your final agenda item, other than setting another meeting date, should be identifying the ongoing role, if any, for the stakeholder group. Appendix E lists many other roles for members of this group. At the very least, invite a smaller core group to serve as an ongoing advisory committee for the project. This group can assist in pilot testing evaluation methods, conducting some phases of actual project evaluation, and providing advice on mid-project fine tuning.

Agenda Item 6. *Schedule Next Meeting Date*

You may actually be setting dates for two meetings. While your smaller core group may need to meet again in the near future to discuss the development of evaluation instruments or related matters, the entire stakeholder group should plan a meeting at the conclusion of the project at which time you share evaluation results and the draft of final project reports.

Step Four: Redefine the Project Proposal

As we have already said, your project plan is likely to benefit from the varied experiences and points of view of the stakeholder group. It is probable that following the completion of the stakeholder meeting, new ideas will have surfaced, inspired by the proposed project. As grant administrator, you have the ultimate responsibility of evaluating all recommendations and advice, and consolidating it into a well-written project proposal which has the strongest likelihood of meeting the project goal.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

After completing the review and revision of all aspects of the proposal, you will seek the endorsement and approval of your library board, supported by appropriate signatures, and submit the completed application to the Library of Michigan for consideration.

Step Five: Collect and Analyze Evaluation Data

Take advantage of the period prior to the announcement of grant awards by developing and testing data collection instruments or investigating data sources. When appropriate, new methods should be tested before being used to actually collect the data for evaluation of the project. This pilot test is particularly important for surveys but it is a critical part of the design of many methods. Even if you are using existing records, try out your procedures on a small portion of the records first to see if you can locate and interpret the data that you want. Following the pilot test, review the experience with others in the stakeholder group before proceeding. Make any necessary changes in the instruments and procedures before moving to the stage of actual data collection.

Whichever methods you use to collect data, respect the privacy and the rights of the individual. You may ask for permission when using data that could be considered confidential, and if you promise confidentiality then make sure that effective procedures are in place to guarantee it.

Step Six: Summarize Evaluation Data for Stakeholders

Following the completion of all data collection, select and organize the data according to the evaluation questions. Collate the data from each source and method, such as questionnaire surveys and individual interviews, under each question.

The procedures for analyzing data differ depending on whether the information you collect is quantitative or qualitative. In general, quantitative data are used to measure the extent of something this is reported numerically, for example the number or percentage of people who gave each answer on a questionnaire; or the number of new library cards issued, the increase in interlibrary loan requests processed, or the number of database searches conducted.

Qualitative data is gathered through open-ended answers to interviews, questionnaires and narrative observations of events, and can be categorized to answer the evaluation questions. It is based on values, not numerical data. For example, seniors' comments about a new collection might be categorized as one of the following: "helpful with retirement," "entertaining reading," or "does not have what was wanted." In doing data analysis, you must take the quantitative and qualitative information you have collected and determine its significance in both numerical and narrative forms. The analysis should be presented in a way that answers the project's evaluation questions. Consider reviewing the resources listed in the bibliography of this handbook for assistance in selecting the appropriate data analysis method.

To aid your stakeholder group in interpreting the project data, you will need to summarize the information simply, accurately, and clearly. Identify key themes that are suggested by the findings. Providing charts and graphs to express data from lists and counts will also help stakeholders understand the information.

Step Seven: Prepare Final Evaluation Report

The stakeholders should be involved in the interpretation of the findings and in reacting to preliminary and final reports. Find out what individual stakeholders believe are the implications of the data. Their involvement will add credence to your overall findings and will create a sense of stakeholder ownership in the results of the evaluation and in the program. Stakeholder involvement at this point can also bring added visibility to the program when emphasized with a press release or other publicity techniques. The original evaluation questions developed by this group at the beginning of the project can serve as the guide for this discussion. The stakeholder group's final report will then be included in the report sent to the Library of Michigan and to other appropriate audiences.

Wrapping Up

You may want to consider meeting with the stakeholders again to plan future actions for implementation of their recommendations. These might include continuing certain activities, changing others, or working to create even greater public awareness of the program or service. Continue to evaluate an ongoing project or program with help from the stakeholder group.

If the stakeholder evaluation design process has worked well, the library staff, users, and people from the community will be interested in the findings. They will use the findings as evidence for continuing, improving, expanding, or discontinuing the project. The thorough evaluation you have done will help to assure that an appropriate response is made, and the reputation of the library for sound management will be enhanced.

Appendices

Library Project Planning Meeting

Tentative Agenda

1. Introduce Meeting Participants
2. Review Purpose of Meeting
    - Identify Source of Grant Funds
    - Discuss Community Need in Relationship to Grant Funding Categories
    - Present Overview of Project Concept
    - Describe Stakeholder Evaluation Process
    - Summarize Efforts to Date
3. Describe the Proposed Project
    - Goal and Objectives
    - Activities
    - Budget
    - Evaluation
4. Discuss and Complete Project Evaluation Worksheet
5. Determine On-Going Role for Meeting Participants
6. Schedule Next Meeting Date
7. Adjournment

Project Evaluation Worksheet

This worksheet is designed for LSCA projects which will be evaluated by the stakeholder approach described in **LSCA—Stakeholder Evaluation Handbook**. The worksheet should be filled out completely and submitted as the evaluation component of the LSCA grant proposal.

NOTE: If you are not using the stakeholder approach to evaluate your project, do not use this form and instead refer to the instructions in the **Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) FY 1995 Application Guidelines**.

Stakeholder Group Meeting Information:

Place of Meeting Scarecrow Township Library **Date of Meeting** May 16, 1994

Names of Attendees	Stakeholder Groups Represented
Carol Roberts	Senior library users
Ralph Katz	Library staff
Maureen McDonald	Retirement facility residents
Wilma Jones	County Services for Senior Citizens
George Fountain	School district-adult education services

SAMPLE

Provide complete answers to the following questions. Answers should reflect the input of the stakeholder group meeting participants:

I. What questions will the evaluation answer?	II. What sources of data will be used to answer the questions?	III. What methods will be used to collect the data?
1. Was the collection used?	Circulation records Staff observations	Record the circulation statistics on monthly basis Maintain a journal of staff comments
2. Did the collection meet the needs of the senior library patrons?	User satisfaction survey Comments of senior patrons	Place satisfaction surveys in each book of the collection Have staff ask senior patrons
3. In what ways did the collection impact on library services?	Staff observations Registration statistics	Periodic reports from staff Record registration statistics
4.		
5.		

SAMPLE

IV. **In what forms and to whom will the evaluation be reported?**

Project final narrative report - to the Library of Michigan

Presentation by the Library Director - to the Scarecrow Township Library Board of Trustees

Library newsletter article - to the library users

Newspaper article - to the township community

V. **How will the evaluation results be used?**

To assist in decision on expansion of the collection with local funds after the project period has ended.

To strengthen the image of the library

SAMPLE

Applicant page ____ of ____ pages

15

INCORPORATE THESE WORKSHEET PAGES INTO YOUR LSCA GRANT PROPOSAL USING THE PROPER PAGE NUMBERS

Data Collection Methods

Methods	*Description*	*Advantages*	*Disadvantages*
Existing Records (e.g., registration materials, financial records, usage counts)	The library staff may already be collecting information through the normal procedures of the library. By modifying current procedures or simply examining the data in a different way, the library staff may be able to answer some of the key evaluation questions.	Provides quantifiable evidence of activities and results. Requires minimum time, effort, and money.	Analysis can be complicated. Data can be misleading if originally collected for different purpose. Usually reflects quantity, not quality.
Observation (e.g., structured participation, casual conversation, counting session attendance)	The library staff or designated program participants may be able to look for specific data in a consistent way that will help to answer the evaluation questions. The observer, through informal interviews or other means, could focus on such aspects of the project as project setting, nature of interactions, program activities, library user behaviors, informal interactions, unplanned activities, and unexpected behavior.	Requires minimum interruption to program activities. Provides check on reports of staff and users. Provides context for understanding other data.	Observer must be skilled in process observation. Observer filters data through individual perspective and values. Program participants may not be open and natural.

Methods	*Description*	*Advantages*	*Disadvantages*
Individual Interviews (e.g., structured interviews with individual participants, face-to-face or by phone)	The library staff may develop structured questions for interviews with key people. The interviews with individuals should consist of a series of questions designed to provide the specific information needed. The interview can be conducted face-to-face or by telephone. Designing effective questions and conducting a good interview is not an easy task and may require an experienced interviewer.	Can probe for meaning of responses. May create participant willingness to disclose sensitive information. Can control when and how questions are asked.	Time consuming. Analysis may be difficult. Requires skilled interviewer. Some participants may feel threatened.
Group Interviews (e.g., focus groups, nominal groups, work groups)	The library staff may collect information from small groups of people. A focus group (8-12 persons) is used when group interaction is likely to increase the quality of the data being collected. If possible, the group should be led by a skilled group facilitator and another person should document comments of group members, the consensus of the group on specific issues, and any observations about group member interactions.	Stimulates thinking and sharing ideas. Can get different views on same subject. Can get consensus about a program.	Cannot be confidential. May be difficult to organize. Some participants may feel threatened. Requires skilled group interviewer.

Data Collection Methods (Continued)

Methods	*Description*	*Advantages*	*Disadvantages*
Journals/Logs (e.g., participants self-reports and critiques of experience)	The library staff could be asked to keep a record of anecdotes, observations, personal reactions, comments, and the frequency of specific activities relating to the project. The purpose of using this method is to understand the experience of the program from the participant's point of view. The information collected, however, will be subjective and may be difficult to analyze.	Provides record of immediate reaction to events. Provides record of change over time. Requires minimum effort to collect data. Provides record of unanticipated events.	Data is subjective and not as reliable. Can be difficult to analyze. Participants must be trained in how to record information.
Questionnaire Surveys (e.g., systematic data collection instruments: paper and pencil, telephone, computer)	The library staff can use questionnaires in obtaining information from a large number of individuals. The nature of the information to be collected should be easily categorized. Surveys may be mailed or hand-delivered, person-to-person, or telephone surveys. Questionnaires that collect accurate data are not simple to design and administer. One may wish to use an experienced individual in designing the survey. Time should be taken to obtain feedback from stakeholders and a few people in the target population should test the survey before finalizing.	Can collect data from large number of people in short time. Relatively inexpensive. Can be confidential. Provides ease of analysis and summarizing of data.	Data is restricted by the questions that are asked. Substantial planning time is required. Return rates can be quite low.

Methods	*Description*	*Advantages*	*Disadvantages*
Expert Opinion (e.g., panel of library directors)	The library staff may contact people who are knowledgeable because of their experience and expertise in the content or process of the project that is being evaluated. These people could be national experts, university faculty, or directors of successful programs in other libraries. Such persons can help assess the needs for new projects and programs; react to the quality of existing or planned programs; and suggest ways to improve programs. This expert opinion can be gathered through direct contacts with the individuals or through a review of reports and articles that they have written.	Is relatively simple to design and inexpensive to implement. Strengthens lines of communication between experts and participants. Brings visibility to project.	Experts may not be available for this. May be difficult to find neutral experts. Participants may not be directly familiar with program.

Bibliography

Brinkerhoff, R.O., Dale M. Brethower, Terry Hluchyj, and Jeri Ridings Nowakowski, *Program Evaluation*, Hingham, Massachusetts, Kluwer Nijhoff Publishing, 1983.

Fink, A. & Kosecoff, J. *How to Conduct Surveys: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1988.

McClure, C.R., *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1987.

Patton, M.Q. *Creative Evaluation*. Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1987.

Patton, M.Q. *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation*. Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1987.

Rosenberg, P. *Cost Finding for Public Libraries*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1985.

Singleton, R., Straits, B.C., Straits, M.M., & McAllister, R.J. *Approaches to Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Tice, K.E. & Gill, S.J. Education Information Centers: An Evaluation. Journal of Career Development, Vol. 18(1), Fall 1991, pp. 37-50.

Turock, B.J. *Library Programs: Evaluating Federally Funded Public Library Programs*. U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1990.

Van House, N.A., Lynch, M.J., McClure, C.R., Zweizig, D.L., & Rodger, E.J. *Output Measures for Public Libraries*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1987.

Additional Roles for Stakeholders

In addition to the role that stakeholders will play in identifying evaluation questions, data resources and data collection methods, individual members of the stakeholder group or a smaller advisory committee may serve in the following roles:

- Function as a Planning Committee
- Develop evaluation instruments
- Pilot test evaluation instruments
- Assist in evaluation implementation and data collection
- Provide "reality checks"
- Participate in project promotion
- Assist with problem solving for the project
- Provide interim evaluation analysis and advice on project revision
- Pursue future project funding
- Assess long-term effects or impact of the project
- Identify needs and propose future projects for consideration
- Provide a cadre of individuals which may be called upon to serve on the library board, friends group or ad hoc committees

Glossary

Evaluation

A method or methods of measuring the level of success of a project based on the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information. Evaluations should answer the questions "so what?" or "what difference did the project make?"

Funding Areas

LSCA project categories which are eligible for LSCA funding. Specific funding areas are designated by the Library of Michigan as being active for each fiscal year.

Goal

A general statement which describes the project's broad overall intent.

Methods

Statements describing how project objectives will be accomplished.

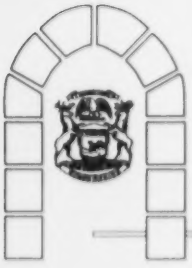
Objectives

Specific statements identifying what will be achieved during the life of the project. Each objective must be directly related to the project goal and will, ideally, be expressed in measurable terms.

Stakeholder

An individual who has a significant concern or "stake" in the success of the project being evaluated, e.g., teacher, city manager, library user.

The Library of Michigan is committed to the effective evaluation of LSCA projects. This has been reflected by encouraging LSCA applicants to use the stakeholder evaluation method. The Library of Michigan is participating in the national Evaluating Library Programs and Services project, coordinated by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This project is developing the Tell-It model of evaluating library programs. Tell-It is similar to the stakeholder approach, however, it presents a broader framework for evaluation. Next year, the Library of Michigan's evaluation handbook will be expanded to incorporate the Tell-It approach. In future years, the focus on evaluation will continue to be a priority and new evaluation approaches will be included in the Library of Michigan's LSCA program.



Library of Michigan

P.O. Box 30007, 717 West Allegan Street, Lansing, MI 48909
Administration: 517–373–1580. Information: 517–373–5400.

Recycled
94-086